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STATE FOR WHA/CAR (BENT), WHA/FO (SNIDLE) AND PM/WRA (PICO)

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SUBJECT: GOJ'S RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL US-CARICOM MINISTERIAL
INITIATIVE ON COMBATTING ILLICIT ARMS TRAFFICKING

REF: SECSTATE 40149

1. (SBU) March 16, Poloff delivered reftel talking points via facsimile to Joy Wheeler, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. On March 20, Poloff received a response from Karl Hamilton, Ministry of National Security, through Claudette Francis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

2. (U) The GOJ's response to potential US-CARICOM ministerial initiative on combatting illicit arms trafficking is as follows:

"The Ministry welcomes this initiative and hope that it will bear fruit given Jamaica's active support and participation in both the UN Programme of Action and the OAS CIFTA Convention on the issue.

It is hoped that, particularly, technical assistance can be provided for the region in the marking and tracing of weapons, seeing that we are net importers of arms. The deepening of customs and law enforcement exchange of information and intelligence is always welcome.

Being aware of the problems associated with the illicit import and trafficking of firearms, it is hope the US keeps its word in assisting in this area, especially as it relates to the stricter monitoring (sic) of weapons being exported from its shores.

Jamaica, however, is still in support of a legally binding instrument at international level to compel states to provide information on tracing and marking and other issues pertaining to the export, import and transshipment of arms and ammunition, but we are very much aware that the United States, as producer country, is very much against this.

I understand that Hon. Minister Phillips will also be in attendance at this meeting and should be able to expound on the issue. Please also consult with the International Organisations Department with which this Ministry/Division has and will continue to exchange documents and views on the issue at hand."

JOHNSON